

ATLAS (Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids)

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

ATLAS (Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids) is a multicomponent, school-based, drug and alcohol prevention program for male high school athletes, 13 to 19 years old. It is delivered to a school sports team, with instruction led by student-athlete peers and facilitated by coaches. ATLAS promotes healthy nutrition and exercise behaviors as alternatives to substance use (alcohol, illegal drugs, anabolic steroids, and unhealthy sport supplements).

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

ATLAS was initiated in 1993 with funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). NIDA wanted a program designed to reduce or stop adolescent male athletes' use of anabolic steroids, sport supplements, alcohol, and illegal drugs, while improving healthy nutrition and exercise practices. The program was tested in randomized controlled settings at 31 schools in 12 cities and 2 States (Oregon and Washington) with more than 3,200 participants. The NIDA randomized study was based on 4 years of prior research among more than 1,500 male athletes in 16 high schools in smaller, yearly randomized controlled trials.

RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

U.S. Department of Education: Exemplary Program

National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Effective Program



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL

Developed for a universal audience of male athletes, 13 to 19 years old.

Currently ATLAS is being evaluated among younger middle school athletes, with funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and among older collegiate athletes, with funding from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

CONTENT FOCUS

ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, PARENT COMPONENT, OTHER: STEROIDS

ATLAS targets the use of anabolic steroids, alcohol, illegal drugs, and “athletic supplements” by high school male athletes.

Parent involvement as adjunct strategy:

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and support their children’s healthy decisions by using the sports menu guide that is supplied to the students.

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Coach-facilitated, peer-led interactive curriculum
- Instructor-facilitated, peer-led interactive curriculum
- Sport team-centered, peer-led interactive curriculum
- Life and social skills training
- Team-centered sport nutrition and exercise curriculum with goal-setting and weight instruction

PEER

- Classroom and peer support groups reinforcing unsupportive attitudes toward sexual permissiveness
- Peer-resistance education

SCHOOL

- Instructor-facilitated, sport team-centered, peer-led interactive curriculum
- Life skills training with role-play

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES, PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT

AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES

This interactive instructional program is offered as part of the school's athletic program for male sports teams. The manual contains background information about the program; a squad leader's training guide (scripted 90-minute session to train peer leaders); the 10-session curriculum guide; overheads; and the 3-booklet Athlete Pack curriculum (*Team Workbook*, *Sports Menu Guide*, and *Exercise Training Guide*). The *Squad Leader Training Guide* is used by peer (squad) leaders in five- to eight-person groups within the team setting, who direct most of the activities in conjunction with the instructor/coach who facilitates learning during the sessions by introducing the activities, timekeeping, and wrapping up. Sessions have multiple interactive "fun" activities to engage the student-athlete, including role plays, decisionmaking, evaluating media messages, and creating mock public service campaigns. Topics address the effects of anabolic steroids, alcohol, and other drugs and supplements on athletic abilities; sports nutrition; and strength-training alternatives to steroids and other "athletic supplements." Individualized weight training programs are provided, addressing high repetition/low weight, low repetition/high weight, and power training to be used to supplement current programs or designed as sport-specific training.

PEER LEADERSHIP

Along with a coach/facilitator, peer athletes are used as leaders in small groups. A highly scripted squad leader's training section in the *Instructor Guide* and *Squad Leader Training Guide* provides training tips for peer squad leaders, who assist in the practice of teaching activities and coordinating instruction with the facilitator/coach.

HOW IT WORKS

ATLAS is delivered in a classroom to an entire sports team. Students are divided into small social learning groups with a peer (squad) leader for each group. ATLAS' team-centered approach works to exert positive peer pressure and promote positive role modeling. It is easy to implement, because it is highly scripted with explicit instructions. Each of the program's ten 45-minute sessions comprised of interactive activities including:

- Educational games
- Role-playing exercises
- The creation of mock public service campaigns
- Friendly competition between squads

Because of their significance for adolescents, the program focuses on potential immediate consequences, rather than the future adverse effect of substance use. Athletes learn how to achieve their athletic goals using state-of-the-art sports nutrition and strength training and to avoid harmful substance use that will impair their physical and athletic abilities.

Team workbooks, sports menus, and training guides complement the instructional materials.

A 1-day training program, offered by the program developer, is not required but is recommended for school districts with multiple teams and coaches. Training will enhance the fidelity of the curriculum delivery. Successful replication of ATLAS also requires:

- A highly committed coach-facilitator
 - A coach "Instructor Package" which includes:
 - Program background information
 - *Squad Leader Training Guide* (explains how to train effective squad leaders)
 - *Ten-Session Curriculum Guide*
 - Overhead slides
 - Use of student materials (workbook, sports menu, and training guide booklets)
 - Team-based presentation of the program with one peer leader in each small group (i.e., squad) of six to eight students
 - *Ten-Session Curriculum Guide* for each peer leader (this may be photocopied)
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OUTCOMES

DECREASE IN SUBSTANCE USE, REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

Lower index of alcohol and drug use

50% reduction in the index of new substance use (alcohol, marijuana, narcotics, and amphetamines)

50% reduction in new use of anabolic steroids

24% reduction in drinking and driving

REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

50% reduction in new use of "sport supplements"

Greater substance use resistance skills

Reduced substance abuse risk factors (e.g., increased perceived danger and personal vulnerability to harm of steroids; heightened perception of coach intolerance to drug use; enhanced resistance skills; less belief in media advertisement)

Reduced use of performance-enhancing supplements

IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

Improved substance abuse protective factors (e.g., better nutrition behaviors, improved perception of athletic competence)

Improved athletic self-efficacy

Improved nutrition and exercise behaviors

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Increased number of reasons not to use anabolic steroids

Greater perception of the team and peers as an information source

Improved knowledge of alcohol, marijuana, and anabolic steroids

Benefits

ATLAS-trained students demonstrate:

- Improved substance use resistance skills
 - Higher perceived personal susceptibility to the harmful effects of drugs
 - Increased belief that their coach will not tolerate steroid use
 - Improved perception of their personal athletic competence
 - Reduced drinking and driving occurrences
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EVALUATION DESIGN

In a randomized control design, three sequential cohorts were assessed before and after each athletic season (1994, 1995, 1996) and were combined for analysis. At followup, 1 year later, program effects were available for the 1994 and 1995 cohorts and combined. Fifteen high schools used the ATLAS program; 16 schools served as controls. In addition to confidential survey results, objective measures (i.e., body composition, body weight, muscle strength) were evaluated to assess the health promotion aspects of the trial.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

5–24 WEEKS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

Ten 45-minute interactive classroom sessions for instructional groups of six to eight students per group.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

Developed for suburban, urban, and rural schools.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

A highly committed coach-facilitator

Use of coach instructor package

Use of student and squad leader materials

Team presentation of the program with one peer leader in each small group of six to eight students, using the curriculum workbooks.

Optional components or strategies:

Participating in the 1-day training program provided by the developer may enhance fidelity, enthusiasm, and better understanding of background materials.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Problem: Belief that ATLAS is only a steroid prevention program.

Solution: Foster the understanding that ATLAS focuses on alcohol and other drugs of abuse and promotes athletic potential for the young athlete. The use of “steroid” in the title of ATLAS is designed to engage the athlete rather than state that this is strictly a drug prevention program. Students learn critical sports nutrition and strength training skills to enhance their athletic potential. After ATLAS, students believe they are better athletes.

Problem: The program was used in the Salt Lake City School District in 2001, in conjunction with the holding of the 2002 Winter Olympics. It was initially slated for use with athletic teams playing baseball, football, tennis, cross-country, track and field, and soccer. However, it was not implemented with any team due to poor communication between athletic directors and coaches, along with an active grievance between the coaches and the school district over a pay cut to district coaches. Also, there was the belief that low-income students were dealing with survival issues rather than getting bigger for sports, and a misperception that ATLAS dealt only with anabolic steroid use.

Solution: After successful implementation by an extramural soccer coach resulting in high satisfaction with both the coach and student-athletes, the school administration improved its communication with individual schools and athletic directors. All of the district’s high school male sport teams implemented the program. Initial evaluations revealed a substantial reduction in alcohol and marijuana use, reduction in drinking and driving, and improved health behaviors after ATLAS.

Problem: Belief that there is not enough time to implement ATLAS.

Solution: ATLAS should be viewed as part of the training program for an athletic team. It creates greater team cohesion, establishes team leaders, and improves student-athlete habits (exercise, training, and nutrition) in addition to avoiding harmful drugs. Athletes use the lessons learned during the week to enhance their sport performance. ATLAS can be implemented before or during the sport season, by implementing the program on “light” practice days or extending other practice days by 10 to 15 minutes.

Problem: Coach/instructors are too busy with other tasks.

Solution: Use assistant coaches or trainers to implement the program, making each coach responsible for facilitating specific sessions.

Problem: Creating enough time to implement the program (ten 45-minute sessions) during the sport season.

Solution: Implement the program during:

- “Light” practice day of the week, and/or extend the other daily practices by 10–15 minutes
- Zero (pre-school) period, once each week
- Pre-season
- A classroom session as part of the school’s curriculum

Problem: Students who participate in multiple sport seasons, making ATLAS redundant.

Solution: Choose students who have participated in ATLAS during one season as the peer (squad) leaders during subsequent seasons.

Problem: Handling student-athlete participation in the program in subsequent years.

Solution: Previously trained students can become squad leaders for younger students in subsequent years. A booster curriculum soon will be available to reinforce the initial 10-session curriculum.

Problem: Cost of the program.

Solution: Use squad leaders and team members to assist in gaining support from local businesses to support ATLAS in the school district. Acknowledge the support of the businesses by placing their logos on ATLAS materials.

Problem: Avoiding the peer leaders who use alcohol or drugs.

Solution: Squad leaders should be chosen from among student-athletes who request to be squad leaders, and who are willing to make the following commitments: (1) they will avoid all drug and alcohol use; (2) they will attend the 90-minute squad leader training session with the coach/facilitator; and (3) they will take the time to prepare for each session.

Problem: What is the curriculum for female student-athletes?

Solution: Results on ATHENA—Athletes Targeting Healthy Exercise and Nutrition Alternatives—which focuses on adolescent female athletes, are expected to be published in 2005. ATHENA has been studied for 3 years in more than 40 schools in Oregon and Washington.

PERSONNEL

FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, PAID, VOLUNTEER

A highly committed coach/coaching staff implementing the program with fidelity.

Typical personnel problems encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:

Problem: Skipping or limiting the time for activities.

Solution: Schedule sessions when there is sufficient time to complete the activities (approximately 45-minute session).

Problem: The head coach is too busy with other activities.

Solution: Use an assistant coach/coaches or trainers to facilitate the sessions.

Problem: Avoid the peer leaders who use alcohol or drugs.

Solution: Student-athletes should be chosen from those who request to be squad leaders and who make the required commitments. This allows students who may be using illegal or controlled substances to opt out and not become squad leaders.

EDUCATION

HIGH SCHOOL, UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, SPECIAL CERTIFICATION,
SPECIAL SKILLS

Education and qualifications of the personnel needed to successfully implement this Model Program:

Coach/coaching staff that meets the requirements and guidelines set by the school/school district where the program is implemented.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: CLASSROOM, Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer location),
Length: BASIC (1 day)

The products are well scripted so training is not required, although it is recommended.

A 1-day (approximately 7-hour) training session is especially recommended for school districts with multiple teams and coaches to enhance the fidelity of the curriculum delivery. Classroom-based training offered by the program developer can be performed on site or at the developer's location in Portland, Oregon. Participants will need the *Instructor Guide*.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this Model Program with 80 students, as defined by the developer:

ATLAS is implemented in a classroom setting at a school.

Cost Example

To implement ATLAS with a team of 80 high school football players would cost \$426 plus approximately 12% shipping charges. This includes \$105.95 for one *Instructor Guide*; \$89.50 for 10 *Squad Leader Guides* (one squad leader and seven other student-athletes), and \$230.65 for 70 Athlete Packs (one for each student-athlete).

If a 1-day optional training session is planned, costs would include \$1,000 for one trainer (who trains up to 25 coaches) or \$1,500 for two trainers for 50 coaches/day (plus travel and per diem costs). If the 1-day training includes squad leader training, the training can accommodate 25 coaches and 50 squad leaders, using two trainers at \$1,500.

T-shirts or sweatshirts for student-athletes, polo shirts for coaches, and water bottles are desired, low-cost items that can be ordered, with prices varying based on size of the order.

To reduce costs, individual schools may photocopy both the *Instructor Guide* and the *Squad Leader Guide* (contained in the *Instructor Guide*) for use by multiple coaches, instructors, and squad leaders.

TRAINING

Instructor Guide set (includes 3-ring binder with 6-chapter background information, 90-minute *Squad Leader Training Guide*, 10-session *Curriculum Guide* and overhead slides, and the 3-booklet Athlete Pack, which may be photocopied for other coaches) \$105.95

Squad Leader Guide (includes squad leader training materials, 10-session *Curriculum Guide*, and 3-booklet Athlete Pack; *Squad Leader Guide* may be photocopied from the *Instructor Guide*) \$8.95

Student-Athlete Materials: Athlete Packs (each pack contains a *Curriculum Workbook*, *Sports Menu Guide*, and *Training Guide*) (Sets of ten 3-booklet packets) \$32.95

Available products:

Instructor Guide (includes program background information, *Squad Leader Training Guide*, 10-session *Curriculum Guide*, overhead slides, and 3-booklet Athlete Pack).

Set of 10 Athlete Packs (each includes *Curriculum Workbook*, *Sports Menu Guide*, and *Squad Leader Training Guide*).

Squad Leader Guide (includes squad leader training materials, 10-session *Curriculum Guide*, and 3-booklet Athlete Pack for each peer leader or these materials may be photocopied from *Instructor Guide*).

Pre- and post-questionnaires that evaluate knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (available at no cost or may be photocopied).

Fidelity evaluation forms (available at no cost or may be photocopied).

PowerPoint background and ATLAS results presentation.

Also available are ATLAS coach polo shirts, squad leader long-sleeved shirts and sweatshirts, student-athlete T-shirts and sweatshirts, and water bottles.

Typical cost issues encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:

Coaches may want to have snacks and T-shirts to supplement ATLAS and support cost of ATLAS materials. Students pay a fee for these items, included in the costs assessed to participate in sports.

Squad leaders/student-athletes request donations or at-cost healthy snacks and/or request support from local businesses as sponsors of ATLAS for the school sports program. Stickers with the logos or names of the donor businesses can be placed on curriculum items (booklets, *Squad Leader Guides*) and in the school weight room. They can be listed as "ATLAS boosters."

INTENDED AGE GROUP

EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (13–17)

Developed for males 13 to 19 years of age. Currently it is being evaluated among younger and older athletes.

INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE, ASIAN AMERICAN, WHITE, HISPANIC/LATINO, NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER

The program is designed for participants from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It has been tested in student-athlete populations with African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

GENDER FOCUS

MALE

Developed for males only.

REPLICATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

ADAPTATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

The developers are Linn Goldberg, M.D., and Diane Elliot, M.D., professors of medicine at the Oregon Health and Science University, where they direct the Division of Health Promotion and Sports Medicine (HPSM) and the Human Performance Laboratory. Drs. Goldberg and Elliot have been crew chiefs for the United States Olympic Committee, consultants to the World Health Organization, and physicians for professional sports. They have collaborated on more than 170 scientific publications, including 3 books, and have obtained more than 20 research grants. The HPSM Division at Oregon Health and Science University distributes materials.

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT

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Drs. Goldberg and Elliot are available for consultation by e-mail, fax, or phone to all ATLAS coaches and participants regarding strategies for implementation; overcoming barriers; updated background information about sport supplements; and drugs in sport, nutrition, and exercise.

TO ORDER MATERIALS, CONTACT:

Sunburst Technology
Phone: (800) 431-1934
Web site: www.sunburst.com